

Inspection of The McAuley Catholic High School

Cantley Lane, Cantley, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN3 3QF

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Older pupils have seen the school improve over the last few years. They say that behaviour is improving. Parents and staff speak positively about the caring ethos and the consideration given to teachers' workload. We agree. The progress made since the last inspection should be celebrated.

Pupils say that there is someone they can turn to if they are being bullied or have worries. Pupils feel safe in and around the school, despite some pushing and shoving in narrow corridors.

Inconsistency is a thread that runs through many aspects of the school's work. Some teachers have higher expectations of pupils than others, especially when managing behaviour. Generally, pupils say they feel respected and well cared for. They value the older 'buddies' they can talk to if they have a worry, as well as talking to teachers.

The headteacher has helped to build a culture which aims to develop pupils in every sense. The '7-Year Pledge', from Years 7 to 13, aims to develop well-rounded individuals ready for the next stage of their lives. This aims to go beyond passing examinations. This is what makes this school distinctive.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The key stage 3 curriculum is not ambitious enough. Pupils miss out on important content that they should be taught. The curriculum remains a work in progress.

Some curriculum leaders have a good understanding of how to build a high-quality curriculum. Others do not. Consequently, in some subjects, teachers are unclear about what the essential things are that pupils should know, remember and be able to do. This means that teaching does not consistently deliver the necessary experiences for pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Teachers do not consistently follow whole-school policies. For example, the school's own recent checks show that there are many teachers who do not help pupils to improve their spelling.

Leaders have worked hard to encourage pupils to follow a range of academic subjects at key stage 4. However, the outcomes for pupils in English, science and languages are not good enough. Leaders rightly acknowledge that this remains a key priority.

Pupils' behaviour is improving. However, it is not good enough. Some teachers do not follow the behaviour policy well. Many pupils spoke about how different teachers deal with poor behaviour. There are times when pupils do not listen to what the

teacher is saying or are too noisy and shout out. This means that other pupils struggle to concentrate and get on with their own learning.

Pupils say the toilets are unpleasant. There are several cubicles without locks on them. There is no soap in some toilets. They smell, and there is hardened toilet paper stuck to the ceilings. Some choose not to use the toilets at school. Leaders indicate that there are plans to improve this.

Overall, pupils' attendance is improving. It is not good enough for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils' punctuality needs to improve. Leaders have installed red digital display clocks around school. There are early signs that this initiative is starting to have an impact.

Sixth-form provision remains good. Students enjoy a stronger and better-designed curriculum. Leaders have broadened the range of subjects that students can take. These include criminology, government and politics, and creative media. This has made the sixth form popular. Students have high levels of attendance and arrive on time for school and lessons. Students benefit from a good range of enrichment activities. These include trips and work experience that are tailored to students' interests.

Careers guidance is a real strength across the whole school. It does a good job of helping to inform pupils and students of their next steps in education, employment or training.

The headteacher and other senior leaders have been instrumental in changing the school ethos. There is now an empowering culture where curriculum leaders are expected to be the 'engine room' for improving the school. However, some are not firing on all cylinders. This is because there has not been enough training and support to help all curriculum leaders develop and design high-quality learning for all pupils.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that workload issues are well handled.

Governors have not ensured that the school's improvement plans contain measures that they can judge progress against. Plans do not sufficiently show the impact leaders will have on improving pupils' experience of school. Governors have a good understanding of their role in financial matters and safeguarding. They have a less secure sense of how to ensure that the school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide helpful updates for all staff. These updates ensure that everyone remains vigilant.

Leaders work well with other agencies and professionals. Staff make sure that all of the appropriate checks are made before new colleagues start working in the school. The school corridors are narrow. This sometimes leads to pupils being pushed and shoved. Leaders have rightly identified the need to review and update all their health and safety risk assessments.

Leaders work well with alternative providers and check that pupils attend regularly, and that the curriculum is tailored to meet their complex needs.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The key stage 3 curriculum lacks sufficient depth and ambition. This means that pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not gain a well-rounded education before starting their exam courses. Leaders need to review the curriculum to make sure that pupils get the chance to study the full range of subjects in more depth.
- Some curriculum leaders do not have a clear sense of exactly what it is pupils should know, remember and be able to do. This means that there is a lack of suitable challenge over time. Curriculum leaders need more guidance, support and training to help them tackle these issues.
- The attendance of some pupils is not good enough. Pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, miss school too often. Leaders need to make sure the attendance of all groups of pupils increases so that it is at least in line with national averages.
- The behaviour of some pupils is not good enough. There are too many times when teachers do not consistently and effectively tackle poor behaviour. This stops other pupils from getting on with their learning, and is distracting. This poor behaviour also leads to toilets being badly treated. Leaders need to ensure that all staff consistently follow the whole-school behaviour policy. They should make sure that the pupils' toilet facilities are well maintained.
- In some parts of the school there are very narrow corridors. Sometimes pupils feel less safe as they are pushed and shoved when moving from lesson to lesson. Leaders must ensure that all of the appropriate steps are taken to ensure that pupils move safely in and around the building.
- Leaders' improvement plans are not good enough. These plans do not clearly show how actions will benefit pupils over time. Governors find it difficult to effectively challenge and hold all leaders to account, including in matters related to the Equality Act 2010. Leaders need to ensure that their plans clearly show how their actions will benefit pupils.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	140865
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10121721
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1593
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	261
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Dr Patrick Hurley
Headteacher	John Rooney
Website	http://www.mcauley.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	15–16 November 2017

Information about this school

- The school uses some alternative provision, including Morthyng Vocational College in Rotherham, Open Cast, JASP (Joint Agency Support Provision) and the Maple Medical Pupil Referral Unit.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with a wide range of senior staff members. These included the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator. We also met with six governors, including the chair and vice-chair. We had telephone conversations with the external school improvement consultant and spoke to a range of providers of alternative provision.

- We focused on English, history, art and design, science and modern foreign languages. We spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and students from these lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' and students' work and met with teachers.
- When we inspected safeguarding we met with a wide range of pupils, both formally and informally, including those with SEND. We met with the designated safeguarding leaders and checked a wide range of documents, including a sample of case files. We looked at the school's own surveys of pupils' views. In addition, we took note of 109 responses to Ofsted's survey of staff and 141 parental responses on Parent View. We also had telephone conversations and read emails from parents.
- We spoke individually to newly qualified teachers and non-teaching staff to check their views on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. We also met with groups of pupils, including those pupils who have experienced sanctions under the school's behaviour policy.

Inspection team

Phil Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Lyndsey Brown	Ofsted Inspector
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Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector

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